



EUROPEAN REGION

World Confederation  
for Physical Therapy

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# **Report of the Chairman of the European Region of the WCPT for the period 2008-2010**

**ADOPTED at the  
General Meeting 27-29 May 2010  
Berlin, Germany**

## **REPORT OF THE CHAIRMAN OF THE EUROPEAN REGION OF THE WCPT FOR THE PERIOD 2008 – 2010 TO THE GENERAL MEETING 2008**

### **European Region of the World Confederation for Physical Therapy (WCPT)**

#### **Introduction**

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#### **The changes at organisational level**

The elections at the General Meeting in Athens brought a change in the composition of the Executive Committee.

The members for the period 2008 - 2010 were the following:

- Chairman – António Lopes (2006 – 2010)
- 1st Vice Chairman – Sarah Bazin (2008 – 2012)
- 2nd Vice Chairman – Roland Craps (2008 – 2012)
- Treasurer- Eckhardt Boehle (2006 – 2010)
- Regional representative - Emma Stokes (2007 – 2011)
- The 1st alternate elected for the period of 2008 – 2010 was Elin Engeseth from Norway
- The 2nd alternate elected for the period of 2008 – 2010 was Hans Krijgsman from the Netherlands
- The alternate to the Regional Representative (2007 – 2011) is Cosimo Bruno from Italy.

The composition of the Working Groups did also change due to the normal renewal process.

**For the period of 2008 to 2010 the members of the Working Groups were as follows:**

#### **Professional Issues Working Group**

- Sarah Bazin - Chairman (*Executive Committee European Region of the WCPT*)
- Dieter Hollerwoeger (Austria)

- Daniel Paguessorhaye (France)
- Philip van der Wees (Netherlands)
- Malene Haneborg (Norway)
- Natalie Beswetherick (UK)

#### **European Union Matters Working Group**

- Roland Craps – Chairman (*Executive Committee European Region of the WCPT*)
- Emma Stokes (Ireland and *Executive Committee European Region of the WCPT*)
- Hans Krijgsman (Netherlands)
- John Xerri de Caro (Malta)
- Ana Dimovska Boljevic (Montenegro)
- Elisabeth Carrington (UK)

#### **Education Working Group**

- António Lopes, Chairman (*Executive Committee European Region of the WCPT*)
- Emil Igelsbock (Austria)
- Nina Holten (Denmark)
- Camilla Wikstrom (Finland)
- Sonia Souto (Spain)
- Charlotte Hager-Ross (Sweden)
- Grahame Pope (UK)

### **The major activities and achievements**

The Executive Committee has assured that all the activities of the European Region were in line with the activities and objectives of WCPT. The Regional Representative has acted as the element of liaison with the Executive Committee of WCPT, and the contacts between the two Secretariats have been permanent and fruitful.

The great diversity of activities of the European Region in this period can only be understood with the consultation of the several specific reports presented to the General Meeting. In this report I will only highlight some of the most relevant facts.

## **2<sup>nd</sup> Education Congress**

460 participants from 34 countries were present at the 2nd European Congress on Physiotherapy Education, entitled: “Lifelong learning, developing the physiotherapy profession – Linking education, the profession and employment”, held in Stockholm, Sweden on 25 - 26 September 2008.

The European Region of WCPT also arranged a Post Congress Seminar on physiotherapy education for delegates from the Member Organisations in Stockholm, Sweden on 27 September 2008. 32 delegates from 20 Member Organisations were present.

The aim of the seminar was to analyse the conclusions of the European Congress on Physiotherapy Education and discuss the implications for further work to be developed by the working groups of the European Region of WCPT. The report of this seminar has been sent to the Member Organisations.

## **EU Projects Granted under the Health Programme 2003 -2008**

The European Region of the World Confederation of Physical Therapy (ER-WCPT) presented the Projects “Pain in the Back” - Avoiding back pain in children and teenagers” and “Staying Clean - A Guided Exercise Programme for Stopping Smoking” on 21 – 24 April 2009, at the European Parliament in Strasbourg, France.

The presentation took place between the two buildings of the European Parliament, which it was the perfect spot for visits from the EU MEPs and civil servants.

At the exhibition, leaflets and CDs containing the two projects, information from the ER-WCPT, and material on health promotion and diseases prevention from the following organisations Austria, Denmark, Germany, Ireland, Norway, Spain and the United Kingdom were distributed.

The Executive Committee and colleagues from the Working Groups and Member Organisations were at the exhibition presenting the projects, advising and informing about Physiotherapy.

I would like to use this opportunity to thank all the colleagues involved in the development of these two projects. They raise the profile of the profession in the field

of Health promotion and disease prevention in Europe and the implementation is an important objective.

### **Guideline International Network (G-I-N)**

ER-WCPT has maintained full membership of G-I-N since 2007.

In 2009, the ER-WCPT participated in the 6th International G-I-N Conference which took place in Lisbon, Portugal, on 1 – 4 November 2009. The ER-WCPT and the Portuguese Association were deeply involved in the G-I-N Conference. Under the leadership of Philip Van der Wees two abstracts were submitted and accepted, and two workshops were organized to discuss the participation of Allied Health Professionals (AHP) and Nurses in multidisciplinary guideline development. Both workshops were well supported and very successful.

Philip Van der Wees, the representative of ER-WCPT at G-I-N, was elected to the Board of the Guideline International Network Executive Committee at this conference.

I would like to take this opportunity for thanking him for all his work on behalf of the ER-WCPT, and to congratulate him on his election.

### **Preparation for the establishment of a Foundation**

Following the mandate from the 2008 GM held in Athens, the creation of a foundation of the ER-WCPT named: **European Foundation for Physiotherapy and Physical Activity of the European Region of the World Confederation for Physical Therapy** or, abbreviated **European Foundation for Physiotherapy and Physical Activity** (EFPPA) has started.

During the period 2008 - 2010 the ER-WCPT Executive Committee has been working on its statutes and the ER-WCPT Member Organisations have been invited to submit a mandate to be part of the foundation Special Committee. The election of the Board of Directors is planned to take place after the 2010 General Meeting.

### **New office**

Since September 2008 the Region has rented a new office in Brussels which is within our budget limits and is very well located. It has better working conditions and a better status.

### **Cooperation with ENPHE**

The cooperation with the European Network of Physiotherapy in Higher Education has been maintained. The delegations of the two organisations have met in 2010 and are planning further common activities.

### **Representation of the Region in meetings and events**

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The Region has been represented at several meetings and events.

A special reference must be made to the participation at WHO meetings.

The European Region has continued to participate in the WHO Europe Committee Meeting on an annual basis.

In 2008, the fifty-eighth session of the WHO Regional Committee for Europe took place on 15 to 18 September 2008, in Tbilisi, Georgia. The EC agreed no one from the ER-WCPT would attend due to the unsecure venue of the meeting and the high expenditure of attendance. The Regional Representative informed WCPT of this decision, who agreed with the Region's decision, and a letter of apology was sent to WHO Europe.

In 2009, the European Region was represented by its Regional Representative, Emma Stokes, at the fifty-ninth session of the WHO Regional Committee for Europe in Copenhagen, Denmark, in September 2009. The delegates from the 53 WHO European Member States discussed and agreed on:

- a declaration on protecting health in times of economic crisis: the role of health systems (including social determinants of health);
- starting a discussion on the governance of health within the WHO European Region;
- supporting health workforce policies in the WHO European Region, including the support for a global code of practice for international recruitment of health personnel;
- and the implementation of the International Health Regulations (2005) in the WHO European Region.

At the meeting, Ms Zsuzsanna Jakab, from Hungary, was nominated as the new WHO Regional Director for Europe. Mrs Jakab is currently Director of the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control.

The Regional Representative presented two statements at the meeting on the theme of health in a time of global crisis and health workforce policies

The World Health Organisation (WHO) shares the issues concerning health in Europe, and information and projects are monitored, and the global implications recognised.

It is also relevant to consider the contacts with the **European Commission - DG Internal Market and DG Health and the European Parliament**, regarding, for example, the following matters:

- Directive on Recognition of Professional Qualifications;
- Internal Market Information (IMI) Project related to the Recognition of Professional Qualifications, and specially the obligations of the Member States concerning administrative cooperation on this matter. The ER-WCPT was one of four professions that would participate in the project. The other professions were medical doctors, pharmacists and accountants.
- Patients Right in Cross borders.
- EU Health Strategy, 2008 – 2013.

#### Other conferences

On 9 December 2008, a seminar aimed at examining the proposed EU directive on cross-border healthcare took place at the Kent Brussels Office. The directive is part of the endeavour to provide an EU-wide community framework incorporating:

- common principles in all EU health systems
- a specific framework for managing cross-border healthcare arrangements
- wider promotion of European co-operation on healthcare delivery

The seminar looked at some of the main implications of the Commission proposal such as the need for effective co-operation mechanisms between the member states, such as bilateral treaties; the mobility of health professionals, the legal certainty of the systems themselves, steering instruments to guarantee the sustainability of the systems.

The event consisted of a seminar of 50-60 participants. The ER-WCPT General Secretary acted as chairman, having the double task of introducing the issue at stake and presenting the speakers and at the same time facilitating the debate among the speakers and the participants. The ER-WCPT 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice Chairman, Roland Craps, also participated as a speaker at the seminar

The Executive Committee has considered the necessity of being involved with all relevant European organisations related to our field of activity. Budgetary limitations have restricted greater activity and forced the establishment of priorities.

Taking advantage of having our office in Brussels, and of having a full time General Secretary, priority has been given to attending the meetings held in this city.

**The General Secretary has regular contacts with the following organisations:**

- **European Health Forum – EHF**

Meetings of the EHF are held twice a year. The General Secretary and Roland Craps attended the meetings during this period.

- 10 December 2008: EHF meeting
- 11 December 2008: Open Health Forum
- 21 January 2009: EHF meeting
- 14 May 2009: EHF meeting
- 16 October 2009: EHF meeting, also attended by Ana Dimovska
- 20 May 2010 EHF meeting

The ER-WCPT has obtained the renewal of the full membership of EHF for the period 2010-2013. This underlines the quality of our participation and contributes to consolidate our role as the voice of the physiotherapy profession at European level.

- **European Public Health Alliance - EPHA**

EPHA provides useful information on health issues and EU policy developments and a Member's Electronic Newsletter. The General Secretary regularly attends EPHA Policy Co-ordination Group Meetings, together with other health organisations. The goal of these meetings is to exchange

information among EPHA Members and to discuss the main health topics on the EU agenda.

- **European Health Professionals Associations -**

The European Region of the WCPT had contacts and meetings with the following Health Professionals associations:

Standing Committee of European Doctors (CPME), Dental Liaison Committee of the EU (DLC), the European Midwives Association (EMA), Standing Committee of Nurses of the EU (PCN), Pharmaceutical Group of the European Union (PGEU), European Union of Medical Specialists (UEMS), European Health Management Association (EHMA) and the European Federation of Public Service Unions (EPSU).

## **Future Plans**

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Each of the specific reports presented to the General Meeting has attached a list of proposed objectives and recommended activities. Most of the projects are ongoing and need to be continued or further developed. The General Meeting will have the opportunity to approve the plan of activities for 2010-2012.

Nevertheless, we can assume that all activities will be developed in line with the main objectives and priorities of the WCPT. Some major projects that define the future commitments of the Region, and show a coherent line of action:

- Update the inventory of the profession regarding the level of education, activities and scope of practice;
- Monitor the legislative developments at EU level, and their implications for the profession, and cooperate with all relevant entities and partners;
- Implement and evaluate the EU Health programmes (“back pain” and “staying clean”), and explore other opportunities;
- Further develop the work related to guidelines (clinical and multidisciplinary) and standards of practice;
- Follow up the developments in education at European level, in cooperation with ENPHE;
- Promote the 2nd Guideline Conference in Amsterdam in December 2010
- Promote the third Congress on Physiotherapy Education – 2012.

At organisational level, the improvement of communication with the Member Organisations, the physiotherapists, and the public, in general, will continue to be a priority of action. Within this project the constant renewal of our website is included, having in mind an easy access to the Member Organisations to update directly their own information, and to improve the quality of the information available.

The objective to reinforce the image of WCPT, and of the European Region, as a credible and proactive organisation, representing physiotherapy as a relevant health care discipline and profession, will also be pursued in all activities to be developed.

We will have a very ambitious plan of actions for the near future, but at the same time, we are conscious of our limitations. After twelve years of consolidation of our organisational model, we will have now a new tool to explore new ways and mechanisms to better fulfil the objectives of the European Region of WCPT, the **European Foundation for Physiotherapy and Physical Activity of the European Region of the World Confederation for Physical Therapy.**

### **Closing Remarks**

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All the work of the European Region of the WCPT has been possible with the contribution from a vast number of persons, including the members of the working groups, to whom I would like to deeply thank. Our organisational model relies on the appointment of members to the working groups financially supported by the Member Organisations, and I would like to thank those who have made it possible. Only this way we were able to increase the number of activities maintaining about the same fee per capita. At another level, I would like to thank the Swedish Association for hosting the second Congress on Physiotherapy Education, and the German and Dutch Association for being the key elements for the development of the two EU granted projects.

In general terms I would like to thank the support and collaboration of the Member Organisations in the activities promoted, in particular at the General Meetings, and at the Conferences and Congress.

I would like to say a final word of thanks to our General Secretary, David Gorria, for his support and friendship, stressing his competence and commitment to implement the Working Group's and Executive Committee decisions. He has been able to

consolidate his professional position and to gain the general recognition of the relevance of his contribute to the organisation.

It has been my privilege to chair the Executive Committee, and I must state that the friendship, understanding attitude and collaboration from the members of the Committee, have made my task very easy and extremely rewarding. My warm thanks are extended to all of them.

António M. F. Lopes  
Chairman of the European Region of the WCPT